

**Testimony of Richard Lewis**  
**Health and Hospitals Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee**  
**February 22, 2012**

My name is Richard Lewis. In 2008, I was living in Windham House, a single room occupancy building, that housed 57 people, most of whom were people with disabilities. It was a supportive housing living arrangement: we held our own leases, had affordable rent, and supportive services were paid for by DMHAS and provided by Common Ground. CHFA owned the building and paid Common Ground to manage it.

On January 26, 2009, CHFA told us that we all had 90 days to move. CLRP was at the meeting and offered to help us. Many of the tenants hired CLRP. We were able to hold on to our tenancy until the building was inspected for safety. When it was declared unsafe, CLRP negotiated a temporary rental assistance agreement that guaranteed temporary housing, food, laundry, and transportation. Then CLRP negotiated relocation assistance benefits that provided for a lump sum for people to relocate or for a rental assistance program (RAP) certificate along with moving benefits. I was able to obtain a RAP certificate and relocation benefits and have safe and clean housing and health care services in the community.

Without the help of CLRP, 56 tenants and I would have been out on the street in 90 days with only minimal relocation benefits. Please find money in the budget for CLRP so that their important work is not cut.